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“WATER OFF!”

*NEWSLETTER OF THE
RETIRED FIREFIGHTERS’ ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
(VICTORIAN BRANCH) INC.
August 2000 Vol 4 No3*

Inc/No:A16839F

Barbara McCumisky continues her historical series of the formative years of the MFB.
ANDREW JACK, DYSON & CO. PRINTERS FIRE
December 27, 1915
As reported by the Argus, December 28, 1915

On the afternoon of December 27, 1915, the greatest fire Melbourne has seen in many years, broke out in the bluestone building occupied by Andrew Jack Dyson & Co., printers, at 510 - 516 Collins Street. After gutting the premises, the fire spread to the top floors of the Aberdeen Building located on the corner of Collins and King Streets. An immense amount of damage was done and the



Above: *This burnt-out shell is all that remained of the once grand blue-stone building occupied by the printing firm of Andrew Jack, Dyson & Co.*

whole force of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade was occupied for many hours. A number of calls were received at Eastern Hill Fire Station at about four o'clock, mainly from street fire alarms. Apparently the fire, which had begun in Andrew Jack's premises had been burning for a considerable length of time before it showed itself, some what in the manner of the Colosseum in Prahran last year. In both cases the first visible outburst was a great rush of smoke and sheets of flame, which

practically destroyed the contents of the buildings before it was seen. When the Brigade's first contingent, under the charge of Chief Officer Harrie B. Lee and the Deputy Chief, John Wilkins, arrived on the scene, they attacked the fire from the Collins Street side, and from a right of way that ran up from King Street into Jack's premises. However they were unable to prevent the fire spreading to the top two floors of new offices in the Aberdeen Building.

“GENERAL MEETING”

Notice is hereby given of our next General Meeting to be held at the North Melbourne Football Club Social Club, Fogarty Street North Melbourne (Melway 43 B4) 1030 Hours, Wednesday August 16, 2000

AGENDA ITEMS.

- **Minutes of last General meeting.**
- **President's Report.**
- **Secretary/Treasurer's Report.**
- **Guest Speaker**
- **General Business.**

GUEST SPEAKER THIS MEETING From: SLATER & GORDON

**To talk about the important issue of Compensatable Claims
(More details page three)**

Please come along, bring your partner and have your say in the running of the Association. Join in the fellowship of your old friends and make new ones.

Lunch and beverages will be provided as usual. **@ \$3 per head.**
Drinks at bar prices.

JOHN BERRY
ACTING SECRETARY/TREASURER
Ph: 03 9431 2880

OFFICE BEARERS

President, Don Brennan
Vice President, Ian Fowler
Acting Sec./Treasurer, John Berry
(The position of Secretary/Treasurer vacant)

General Committee;
John Laverick
Bob McNeil
Ross Medwin
Ern Tamme
John Wallace
Auditor; Theo Teklenburg

RFA 2000 Calendar

August 16: General Meeting

November 15: Annual General Meeting

November 25: U.F.U. Annual Luncheon (St Kilda T/H)
by invitation only!

Note:

Please keep information regarding sickies, etc, flowing. We endeavour to keep you informed, but we can only do this with your help.

“Water Off” is edited by John Laverick, 40 Brunel Street Essendon 3040. Phone / fax 9337-9820. E Mail rfa@smartchat.net.au
All articles accepted for publication by the editor are done so in good faith and no responsibility is accepted for any inaccuracies that may occur.

LETTERS

IT'S A SMALL WORLD

On A flight to Christmas Island from Perth, I happened to be sitting next to a former firefighter. His name was Andrew Fidler who spent most of his time at No 1 and No 38 stations. He resigned in 1987 to join his father in a business in Ballarat which failed. He is now erecting safety barriers on Christmas Island for the W. A. government.

He has plenty of work ahead of him and wishes all of his old shift mates “all the best”.

Jim Holmes

To the Editor

In the last issue of " Water Off" in "Silvers" article, Silver made reference to the celebration of 50yrs of "Wedded Bliss" of Frank and myself. He indicated that for a small payment of \$5 and I bet he will not forget to add G.S.T., as it will be after the 1st July, he would

disclose the location of the venue. I am concerned that "Poor Silver" (I would like to have what is in his wallet let alone my purse, which he always refers to) could be so mercenary.

We were only going to have a small celebration with the 25 members of our immediate family. Now that Silver is attempting to recoup some of his losses on the failed worm farm investment and be true to form by ripping off a few old pensioners, who might want to come along. We have decided to nip this in the bud. We have established a 24hr day hot line and the address of the venue will be given out for no charge, the number to -ring is 97151490. Please ring by the 10th of August to assist with catering. With a bit of luck he will be overseas somewhere, when the function is on and will not be able to accept our invitation.

Ellen Churchill

Community Safety Week 2000

Community Safety Week, celebrated this year from September 3-9, aims to focus people's attention on raising awareness and encouraging activities that will prevent and reduce injury, crime and violence. The MFB participates in Community Safety Week with a range of activities from displays at shopping centres to open days at Fire Stations to specifically targeted fire safety activities for high risk groups.

In adopting the Community Safety Model, the MFB has joined with other organisations interested in the community safety movement in Victoria to promote an all encompassing safety culture. The safety movement is a collaboration of violence and crime prevention, injury prevention and emergency management strategies and programs.

A safer community is only possible with community participation and action. Look for opportunities in your own community to participate in the week. There will be lots of publicity about the week in local newspapers – make the most of it.

Stepping Up Falls Prevention

Members of the Brigade's Community Education Department and firefighters from Greensborough Fire Station participated in the Department of Human Services *Stepping Up Falls Prevention* Conference held at Moonee Valley in late June.

Preventing falls among older people is a major health

initiative of DHS and an area that the Brigade is becoming more interested in. Many of our programs for older people, RETIRE ED, Isolated Elderly and Operation Homesafe, can benefit from a knowledge of why and how older people fall.

A number of fires are started when people fall; if trying to escape from a fire, it is important that people move safely and swiftly. In looking at fire hazards around the home, we should also concern ourselves with possible falls hazards as well.

The three major risk factors relative to falls in older people are

- Strength and balance
- Impaired vision
- Home hazards

Fifty percent of all falls occur in the living areas and bedrooms of our homes, with an additional 10% occurring in the bathroom, toilet or kitchen. The major causes of falls are rugs, mats and slippery surfaces.

There was a lot of interest at the Conference in the Brigade's Programs for older people. Many local government workers in aged care, occupational therapists and Royal District Nurses were interested in the work of our firefighters and Retired Firefighters in the area of safety for older people.

BROWN'S BITS

From the roving correspondent of the north-west of our fair city.

I hope I've not messed this story up, but after being promised the details in writing, my informant has let me down. So here goes, as best as I can remember from what he told me.

I think it was Christmas Day and our two S.O.'s "McT" and the other, I think, was "Russ C", were cooking their X-mas dinner at the old 10 Stn. Being ex sailors they were referring to the oven as "torpedo tubes". In between loading the oven with food and slaking their thirst they were rudely interrupted by an agitated tram driver who informed them that a Firefighter had hung himself from an upstairs window. Thinking the trammie was having them on they told him to go places.

The trammie was so insistent they went to have a look. You can imagine McT's reaction when he saw a white faced John D' "The Dancer" apparently dead, hanging from the window with the noose around his neck.

After the initial shock, McT' started shouting instructions to get him down. After much "huffing and puffing" "The Dancer" was lowered to the ground where he promptly stood up and muttered something like - "about bloody time" then calmly removed the safety harness.

They told me McT' really hit the roof and threatened "The Dancer" with everything including castration. If anyone was there on the day and knows the build-up and finale to this incident, I for one would like to hear it.



The agitated trammie was so insistent they went to have a look!!!



RACING TIPS

From My Mate's Cousin

Mystery surrounds our intrepid correspondent. At the time we put this edition to bed, (to use a big time publishing term) the silence from trackside has left us with furrowed brows.

All sorts of rumours are about, from "gone to Queensland" to a darker "the bookies with connections to fruit vendors have put out a contract on him".

Investigative journalism by the editorial staff found the manager of the local TAB, usually frequented by our man, is also concerned. He said, (with a tear in his eye) "I may be forced to close the doors because the turnover has dropped to the point where I can't afford to feed my kids".

His thongs, usually left at the front door, were missing but the push-bike was still in the shed as was the vespa garaged as normal, under a sheet of corrugated iron.

We found skateboard tracks leading down the pathway to a burnt patch on the front lawn. This has led us to believe that one of two things have happened to our man;

- He's gone on holidays and some skateboarding hooligans have set fire to a stack of old form

guides he left on the lawn for recycling - or; been kidnapped by skateboarding aliens hell bent on getting some tips for the next Melbourne Cup. However this is purely speculation and we will go with the following suggestions left by a strange character dressed in a trench coat and dark glasses.

Arad: Trained by D. McGiness at Caulfield. We feel that there is a mistake in the spelling and is really an Arab for we have the good oil that it has enough petrol to win it's next start.

Jingle Bells: Sentimental favourite with everything Christmasy, but don't wait till then to spend some of your hard earned - watch for it's next outing. Trained by L. J. Corsens at Flemington.

Flavour: It will be all vanilla and strawberries when this one comes home. If you have a taste for the sweeter life I'd put the bite on the bookies and make it the **Flavour** of the month. Another from Flemington and trained by J. R. Hawkes.

May the horse be with you.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

At our last meeting mention was made of the trouble we were having with Australia Post and the "Water Off" Magazine mail out. I wrote to "50 50" in the Herald Sun which really started the ball rolling. The Herald Sun contacted me and Tim Jamieson did an interview and photos were taken, Australia Post then made contact and invited some members to go and have a look over the Mail Centre in Dandenong.

Secretary, John Berry, had also made several phone calls and had written to the Ombudsman and Australia Post with the result that after the newspaper reports and John's letters they are going to keep tabs on our next mail-out in August. Lets hope that we have sorted out our problem.

Don Brennan - President

All fired up about the late delivery of



Stamp of disapproval: firefighters' president Don Brennan outside his local post office. Picture: STUART MILLIGAN

VICTORIA'S retired firefighters know all about getting to a job on time.

So imagine how they feel when their mail arrives up to 12 days late, sometimes from barely 20km away.

Twice this year, In February and May, members of the retired firefighters' association have not received mail alerting them of their meetings.

In February, the association resorted to the phone once it became clear people had not received the notices.

Association President Don Brennan said he posted 414 newsletters at Bulleen South post office on May 5 but letters still had not arrived at members' homes in Broadmewds and Malvern 12 days later.

"I was told they picked them (letters) up that afternoon, they were taken to Dandenong

(sorting centre) and cleared the following Monday," Mr Brennan said. "Where they went after that, I just don't know. It's getting to be a bit of a nuisance."

Secretary John Berry has written to Australia Post requesting an explanation. Australia Post spokeswoman Linda Giddy said Mr Brennan would be contacted in an effort to solve the problem.

Victoria has the second slowest mail delivery system in the country.

An independent audit by KPMG of mail delivery in the three months to March 2000 found 92.4 per cent of standard letters in Victoria were delivered on time.

In the metropolitan area, mail should arrive the next business day, according to Australia Post's official delivery times.

- TIM JAMIESON

IMPORTANT GUEST SPEAKER

Following a report of asbestos related problems with some of our retired members, we have arranged for a legal representative from the firm of Slater & Gordon to address our next meeting. The aim is to give our members in simple terms information on compensatable claims.

VALE

Jim Jackson
 Danny Doyle
 Stan Patten
 Mrs Keith Commerford
 John Hume, President, N.Z. Ret. Firefighter, "Old Boys Club".
 We offer our condolences to the families of these members who have passed on to a higher duty.

SICK LIST

Ron Cass,
 Lionel Rose,
 Claude Selby,
 Fred Wittmer,
 Jim Nevins,
 Kevin O'Connell,
 Keith Milte,

Bluey Billington,
 Bronco Allen,
 Graeme Simpson.

We wish these members a speedy recovery.



ACTING SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT

Here we are only into the eight month of the new millennium and it is clearly showing the planet we inhabit is experiencing a great deal of change. Global warming is playing havoc with the weather, civil unrest in our near neighbour islands, Aust dollar the lowest since it was floated, Goods and services tax introduced into Australia and Silver has forgotten where he has buried his tins of money, (Maybe near the Balaclava rail station)!

On the brighter side, this is the year of the Olympics and Paralympics also the World Firefighters Games that have just been completed in Paris. If you did not attend the games in Paris and missed out on tickets for the summer games then there are still tickets available for the Paralympics. I can assure you, if you are looking for top sport at great venues that will give you the opportunity to bask in the atmosphere of the games then this is the one for you. WE WISH THE COMPETITORS SUCCESS IN THEIR ENDEAVOURS AND ENJOYMENT IN THE CHALLENGE OF COMPETITION!

OLYMPIC TORCH RELAY

Many of our members may not be aware of the fact that Ted Harrison's daughter Jodie an active member of the M.F.E.S.B, will be part of the relay in Melbourne on Monday the 31st of July when it passes along Alexandra Avenue at 1.25 P.M. Many would be aware of Ted's prowess as a Cyclist and Triathlete winning trophies and medals in Australia and overseas, however, you may not be aware of the prowess of Jodie. In swimming and surfing etc. she makes Dad look like he is going backwards when they compete against one and other.

The last time the games were held in this country in 1956 and the relay was run one of our past foundation members, the late Ron Moran, was part of the event. Ron being a one-eyed North Melbourne supporter took it upon himself to make the day memorable for the huge crowd lined up in North Melbourne, imagine Ron decked out in running gear with a mock torch and flame. The people cheered and clapped to see this fit young man waving and smiling as he passed them by. Story has it those present enjoyed it better than the real torch, I know the North supporters did, his wife Shirley would be better able to explain the day!

C.F.A CIRCULAR NO 17/2000

RE: EVALUATION AND INTRODUCTION OF NEW, UPGRADED OR NON APPROVED EQUIPMENT. Any Member still active in the Authority must make themselves aware of the direction

put out by the Acting Chief Officer Russell Rees. Information courtesy of Brigade News.

NEW C.E.O M.F.E.S.B

Mr Peter Akers former Director, Community Safety has been appointed to the vacant role of Chief Executive Officer. Dave Nicholson, (Acting) Director Community Safety has been appointed to the Directors position. The R.F.A congratulate them on their appointments and wish them well.

PROGRESS OF LOGO RESEARCH

A number of members i.e. Lipscombe, Martin, Sanders and Wallace have forwarded to the Acting Secretary a number of drawings/suggestions regarding possible changes to the current badge, each one has been of a high standard and the people involved are to be congratulated for their effort. On completion of the research a copy of all logos will be forwarded to each member in the newsletter with a voting paper, first past the post will be the winner, no preferential voting.

M.F.B. BRUNSWICK FIRE CREW TRAMCAR PULL WORLD CHAMPIONS.

The crew from Brunswick at the recent Festival beat all-comers by two seconds in pulling a 22 tonne tram fifty metres. During the event they had to attend to a fire call, only just making it back in time to compete in the final. The 1000 plus crowd loved it, not only did they put out the fire and save the building but also won the event with a time of 35 seconds, what a great effort! This event reminded me of an incident that happened many years ago; the incident involved a tram and car that had collided. The brigade was responded to extricate persons trapped. The Officer in charge Fred Young, (Johnny) instructed firefighter Lionel Jones to push the tram back. Lionel, renowned for his strength, was unable after many attempts to move said tram, Fred of course knew this was the case as the tram's brake was locked on. The exact terminology used by Fred I will leave to your imagination. The way we have in the Fire Brigade.

MEMBER UPDATE

One of our members, Arthur Kinchela, has moved up to Queensland, part of the move involved the transfer of his boat to a new mooring with the second in command on the way Ian Dewhurst, I was told it is only centimetre short of being called a ship. Rumour has it the Royal Family will use it on their next visit instead of the Royal yacht.

Barry Shalders has moved from his Post Office in Cobargo to Milawa Victoria, if touring up that way call in (number available from secretary).

Doug Overton is really into the flower game at the

the hell were you doing"? "Bit too quick for me at my age son" he replied. The young bowler in size 16 boots was Russell Cooke, to play many games for South in football and cricket for Victoria.

A one day game at South Melbourne and we desperately needed some runs quickly. Sandy Jaques, a good batsman, was batting like Trevor Bailey's Coach and was he making Stewie mad. "I'll fix him if I get out there" he said to me and surely he did. Sandy played a perfect defensive stroke a metre down the pitch and then looked up to Stewie inches from his face screaming "Run". He was not run out because the opposition got that much of a shock they forgot to pick up the ball. Stewie then belted 20 odd off the remainder of the over.

Even though I attended a number of large jobs with Stewie, Newmarket Wool Stores, Savoy Plaza, Tivoli to name a few, the most satisfying was a job in the late 60's. North Road Ormond with a M.M.B.W. employee trapped by the foot and rising water threatening to drown him. Nearly every piece of equipment of the rescue was used. It was a pleasure to be with him that day and with the help of many others, after two and a half hours, successfully freed him.

I could never forget Stuart and the times we had. He had a simple code, "If you are my friend you are my friend for life" - and he was!

"Action Jackson"

"SAVED" NEEDS SUPPORT

For those of us who "did time" at the old Eastern Hill Fire Station, we remember it well. Now the Fire Museum appeals for help to save this historic painting and Fred Kerr dispels some myths that surrounded it!

Do you remember the painting that hung in the men's messroom, gymnasium, billiard room and once upon a time in the MFB Board Room at the original Eastern Hill Fire Station? It has been in the safe keeping of the Fire Museum for the past 20 years. Because of its poor condition (both frame and canvas) the Museum Board decided to have it restored.

After extensive enquiries we sent the painting to Victorian Centre for the Conservation of Cultural Material Inc, Cherry Lane, Laverton North. After some weeks they send "word back" that our treasure would cost between \$6,800 and \$8,000 to restore. They also informed us that under the layers of smoke, dust, grime, vomit, beer, whisky, wine, water, sweat, stew, spaghetti, eggs (fried, boiled and scrambled) and gravy, there were dart holes where our near sighted members have missed the dart board. The thing that really puzzled them however, was how in a fire station the painting could be saturated with kerosene. I pleaded ignorance, having no wish to tell them of the exploits of "The Shearer" Archie McLaughlin with his mouthful of kerosene and a cigarette lighter.

The painting was purchased on the recommendation of D.J. Stein (Chief Officer 1891-1908), a Pom who had obviously seen the painting in England and wanted one for the Antipodes.

The painting was first exhibited at the Royal Academy, England 1892. In 1972 the painting was presented to the Fire Services Technical College Morton-In-Marsh, Gloucestershire, England. The artists name is Charles

Vigour. It is thought the painting was inspired by a fire he watched in Porchester Terrace, Paddington.

In the 1890's there were calls for more paintings of firemen and they invariably showed handsome outstanding men in brass helmets stepping calmly and complacently out of flames, always bearing a golden haired maiden or a fainting child in their arms.

No, unfortunately we do not have the original in our possession, but it is worthy of restoration if only because it has been part of the MFB for so long.

The Recruit Course of which I was a member in 1955 was told that the Fireman was an old Senior Fireman rescuing a child in Fitzroy and no doubt other "tall tales" have been told to all of the young firemen over the years. Not true - the above details are the facts as supplied by West Midlands Fire Service, England.

The Fire Museum is now commencing an appeal for funds for the restoration of this work of art. If you can spare some cash could you send it to:



"Saved" Painting Restoration
Fire Service Museum of Victoria
39 Gisborne Street
East Melbourne 3002

"It's the way we have in the Fire Brigade".

F.C. Kerr

ACTION'S CHARACTER COLUMN

Stuart "Stewie" Villani

I first met Stewie upon joining A shift at No 3 Stn. which already boasted Alby Hall, Stan Cameron, Darky Delmo and Bernie Breakspare amongst others. Little did I know of the pleasant nights ahead on the flat roof with a cold drink viewing the frolicking antics of the university students next door.

Had that day not been a day shift it may have been my first day at Carlton and last in the Brigade. I did not know at that stage Stewies personality changed depending on Day, Afternoon or Night shift and in particular where he had arrived from and how long he had been there.

Day shift, Stewie showing the new boy (self) the station and arrive at the petrol scooter. Heard of it but never seen it before. Stewie shows me the basic operation and as I stand there holding what I thought was an empty nozzle, he decides to light a cigarette - trigger accidently pulled - petrol all over him. I have never seen a man go so white so quickly with self immolation in his eyes. I only later realised that had it been an afternoon or night shift he probably would have killed me.

On day shift he would clean all the station on his own, afternoon shift he would argue, even with the Chief and night shift he would even fight with himself. But, as a firefighter and a friend he could not be beaten.

He could always take a joke, particularly against himself. He told me a story that occurred whilst he was at No35 Stn. and of attending a fire at an unmarked premises in Windsor that actually made tailor's dummies of wax and material.

Stewie, having crawled inside, (no B.A. of course) feeling around stumbled across these bodies laying everywhere. You could imagine what happened when the wax got warm and feeling them in the dark. With tears in his eyes and blubbering to the D.O. that everyone inside was dead.

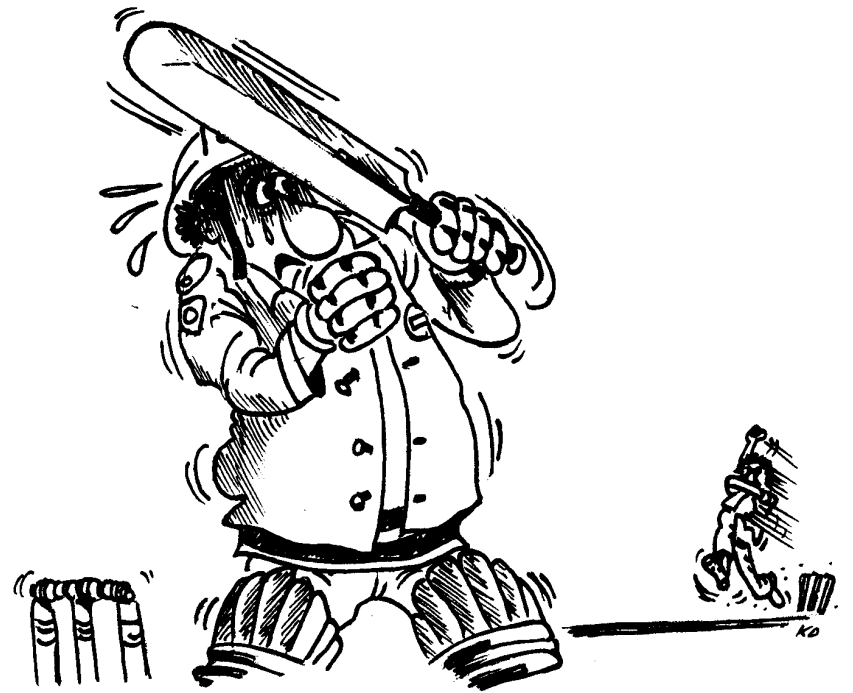
Whether it was cricket, bat tennis, Carlton or Essendon, volley ball or cards, we would always be on opposite sides and we hated to lose. This led to some right royal arguments, and yet, when it was sometimes hot and smoky and apprehension was alive, I could always count on the same voice behind me saying, "Are you alright there son", or, "Do you need a

hand".

Some may remember my pride and joy was a blue Austin Healy sports car. One sunny afternoon heading up Swanston Street I spotted Stewie standing outside the Baths waiting for a tram, "Hop in" I said. As we waited for the lights at Grattan Street I hear the "Vroom, Vroom" of a Four Square Ariel motor bike engine in my ear. Glancing across is my wife's cousin who was a Motor Cycle Cop. I yelled out, "Get out you stupid #@*! copper *#&@!#" and turned to Stewie who's eyes are nearly out of their sockets and thinks the new boy has gone mad. "Pull over screams John catching on quickly. By the time I had pulled over Stewie had slid off the seat and is crouched under the dashboard and John said to me, trying to keep a straight face, "Who said that", and I'm pointing to Stewie.

Stewie and I for a number of years opened the batting for the Brigade Cricket Team. Many opponents were overseas test players in their off season and the competition was pretty fair - you sometimes didn't know who you were playing against.

The new season at Brunswick against the Police Cadets; Stewie say's "I'll face", so as I wait I see his eyes getting wider and wider. Looking over my shoulder I noticed the bowler halfway to the fence, in he comes and lets go. As Stewie lifts the bat to play the ball it has already been flicked from keeper to slips. Next ball, as the bowler lets go, Stewie has taken half a pace down the pitch with the bat in the air and the stumps are everywhere. As he walked off I said, "What



Stewie's eyes got wider and wider as the young bloke in size sixteen boots ran in from halfway to the fence!!!

South Oakleigh Florist if you require any flowers give him a ring (03) 9543 1766. (I always knew he was one of the flower people of the seventies)

ANNUAL LETTER.

We have received our annual informative letter and tourist guide again from Jack Sexton at Hervey Bay, if visiting the area why not give him a ring (number available from the secretary).

M.F.E.S.B. MEDIA PRODUCTION SERVICES.

The media crew from Fire Vision is forwarding to the association tapes of their Television show MESS TV, which are relevant to the R.F.A. If you would like a loan of one they will be available at our meetings, onus to return the tape will be on the borrower. Peter O'Brien from the group is to be congratulated for the idea.

POKIES TRIP

The World Firefighters Games Committee will be running a bus trip to N.S.W in October 2000, any person interested please contact the Secretary Lin Bell (03) 9727 3179

REPORT OF MEETING 17/05/00

Item 1. President welcomed members and their partners and his opening remarks.

Item 2. Apologies. Ammon, Rose, Tamme, Brown, Lang, Hancock, Cotter, Wallace, J.Medwin, J.Brown.

Item 3. Minutes of previous meeting were read and confirmed Moved F.Churchill Seconded G.Payne Carried.

Item 4. Business Arising. Progress on Logo development still being researched

Item 5. Correspondence 11 Letters In / 16 Letters out. Moved F.Stubberfield, Seconded B.Jackson - Carried

Item 6. Secretary/Treasurers Report S.1 \$641.96, I.1 \$4340.03, moved that the report be accepted Moved F. Churchill Seconded J.Howe - Carried

Item 7. The Presidents report was read and accepted.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Item 8. Secretary reported that he had received a number of complaints regarding the quality of the catering at the reunion day. Following discussion for and against the current caterer G. Payne Moved that this meeting of the R.F.A advises the caterer of our concern re quality of food etc for next year Seconded Les Buddle - Carried.

Item 9. The President Moved That this meeting of the R.F.A (a) register its thanks to the Secretary for his effort in contacting members by phone regarding the mail problem with the newsletter and date of next meeting.

(b) The Secretary be reimbursed \$30.dollars from the S.1 account to cover his out of pocket expenses, Seconded A.Stirling - Carried.

Item10. Discussion took place regarding the problems encountered in producing the R.F.A newsletter the Secretary to investigate other alternatives.

Item 11. J. Laverick Moved that this meeting of the R. F.A. support his recommendation that the President Don Brennan and the Acting Secretary John Berry be elected to Life Membership in recognition of their service to the betterment of the Association Seconded Robert McNeil. - Carried unanimously.

Item 12. Following discussion regarding the possibility of developing a nation wide diary of meetings etc of like retired groups. The Secretary was requested to investigate the subject further and report back on results.

Meeting closed 12.15pm.

Trusting this newsletter finds you all fit and well. Come join us at our next meeting and bring your partner.

JOHN BERRY
ACTING SEC/TREASURER.

INVITATION TO AN OPEN DAY

FOR ALL RETIREES AND THEIR FAMILIES

Sunday 12th November 2000, from 1330 Hours
No. 7 Station Mahoneys Road Thomastown

An opportunity to see the latest equipment in use by the Fire Brigade

AFTERNOON TEA SUPPLIED

Please come along and bring the grandchildren for an entertaining afternoon.
This is an initiative of the shift crews of No.7 Station with the full support of the M. F.E.S.B.

“JOCK” HAS PULLED THE PIN!

After 39 years in the job, Gordon “Jock” Baxter, the longest serving firefighter in the M.F.B. has finally realised that there is life outside of the Brigade.

A celebration to mark this significant event and the passing of an era is being held at the:

Bundoora Bowling Club
Cameron Parade, near Bent Street
(Melways 9 K12) on:
Thursday 24th August, 2000, from 6.30pm.
\$6.00 per head for nibbles.

Contact: Kevin Wilson, Phone 9665 4314.
RSVP 17th August



RETIRED FIRIE CARRIES OLYMPIC FLAME

Retired MFB firefighter, Ian Sutherland, (pictured left) carried the Olympic Torch on the Moama leg of it's journey around Australia. To be appointed a torch bearer you have to be somebody special and Ian was modest when questioned about his achievements.

Ian is a member of the local Bush Fire Brigade as well as involving himself with a number of service and charity organisations in and around Moama, which he admits, keeps him busy. Still running every day to maintain his fitness, it obviously stood him in good stead to run his leg of the relay.

result of an electrical fault and when the crew arrived, the house was smoke logged.

The second, in Sunshine, a man who was a known chain smoker. He was smoking in bed and he was found collapsed by the bed.

Once a firie, always a firie and nobody should know better than us how important it is for early warning against fire. So please, check your alarm and remind your friends and neighbours to check theirs.

Smoke Alarms - HOW'S YOURS?

Two fire related deaths recently serve as a reminder to check our smoke alarms.

In seperate incidents, the people who died were over the age of 85 and at this stage there seems to be some doubt as to the presence of working smoke alarms.

The first was a woman in Canterbury. The fire was the

INCOME FROM YOUR ASSETS?

If your retired and a lot of your money is tied up in the family home, there are ways in which you can release some of that cash.

- Sell the family home and move to a smaller, cheaper property.
- Home equity conversion schemes mean a mortgage is taken over the property by a financial institution, which then pays you a lump sum or a pension. When you finally vacate the property, it's sold and the financial institution keeps the proceeds from the sale.

- Your heirs get the balance, if there is any.
- Another possibility is to arrange something with your family whereby your children buy your home as an investment property. You pay rent and may be entitled to rental assistance from Centrelink. Your children use the benefits of negative gearing. You would need to seek advice from a lawyer and the Australian Tax Office (ATO) before entering such an arrangement.

(Source: Choice June 2000 edition)

TUNNEL STUDY GIVES BRIGADE THE EDGE

S.O. David Woods was awarded a scholarship and a trip that for most of us, in our time in the job, would not have dreamed possible. David explains the benefits that this study trip brings to the Emergency Services.

On April 10th, I was lucky enough to be awarded the Emergency Services Foundation Scholarship for Victoria. This scholarship is open to all emergency service workers throughout Victoria, and designed to assist them to make advanced studies in Australia and overseas, to benefit the emergency services.

My study trip investigated the roles, responsibilities and co-ordination required for a multi agency incident in tunnels. I investigated the current international standards and thoughts on tunnel fire detection and suppression systems and the critical issue of the transportation of dangerous goods through road tunnels, to ensure the most effective utilisation of this key transportation asset.

These issues are of utmost importance for Melbourne and the MFB with the recent construction of the Domain and Burnley Tunnels.

The Domain and Burnley tunnels are a key component of the transport infrastructure of the \$1.8B Citylink project. The tunnels form the integrated link in the 22km project, which is aimed at improving transportation costs to Victorian industry in an increasingly competitive economic environment.

This study, by determining current world trends in tunnel operation and emergency management, will ensure that systems in place for Melbourne tunnels are at world's best practice, and the MFB and other agencies function to their fullest potential in any emergency.

Australia is in the infancy stage for road tunnels, when you consider that some countries have had major road tunnels for over 80 years. With the continued trend towards mobility, the increase in high-density housing, the need for an effective transportation infrastructure for industry and environmental concerns, there will be an increase use of tunnels by various types of vehicles within Australia. More tunnels will be constructed and using tunnels will become a daily experience for an ever-increasing section of the community. More traffic, means further potential risk of an emergency situation. Australia's relative inexperience in tunnel operation means many issues required further research. These issues included:

- Are the MFB's response procedures and that of the various support agencies adequate?
- What are the latest overseas standards and trends?
- What procedural changes have occurred as a



Myself (in the middle), with Hong Kong Fire Brigade personnel and operation management in the operations control room of the Tai-Lam Road Tunnel in New Territory, Hong Kong.

result of major incidents in overseas tunnels?

- How could the MFB and other agencies improve their response?
- Should dangerous goods be transported through tunnels, and if so, under what conditions?

Hong Kong

On the 29th April I left Melbourne and arrived in Hong Kong.

Attended a 2 day conference on tunnels, "First International Conference-Tunnel & Underground Station Fires". I then spent 3 days with the Hong Kong fire brigade looking at tunnels.

France

I went to France for 4 days and spent time at CETU, (Centre for Tunnels).

Sweden

- Stockholm- 2 days with the Stockholm Fire Brigade, looking at their 3 main tunnels, of various ages: 30 years, 16 years and 1 in construction.
- Malmo- 2 days with the Malmo Fire Brigade, visiting the Oresund Link. A bridge and tunnel combination linking Sweden to Denmark, opening 1st July.

Switzerland

Met by the President of the Swiss Fire Brigade and spent 4 days with him, visiting the tunnels in that country.

Boston (USA)

Spent 6 days with the Boston Fire Brigade and attended the "Ted Williams Tunnel", part of the 10.8 billion dollar Central Artery Project.

Returned to Melbourne 27th May.

David Woods

MORE OF THE "CHAMP"

Having read Jacko's story about Ray "Champ" Watt (last issue) and the "Niner" it brought back some memories. The two blokes who fronted the The Champ that day were Graham Powell and the one and only Brian "Tich" Renwood. Those who knew Tich will remember him as one of the Brigade's characters. Talk to Tich about Lou Richards and the Collingwood Football Club and he will tell you a story.

I first met Tich when I was running the boundary for the M.F.B. Football Team (1962), he was a very talented footballer, but gee, could he talk on the field. We had Alf Rowe, a top V.F.A. umpire to do the mid-week games and boy, did he and Tich have words. Took Alfie all his skills to stay in charge of the game.

Tich's on-going relationship with Eric Wilson was known by everyone, especially while they and Bobby and Brian Wilson were stationed at No.3. I recall one night Tich was messenger, (he asked for the job so he could put some bets on or something) and about 11pm. Eric asked for the messenger. I called Tich to the SO's office and told him Mr. Wilson wanted him. Tich started mouthing off, "What right does anyone want to do a job this time of night? We're allowed to go to bed at 10 o'clock etc, etc. and what does that old bastard want anyhow?" All, of course, in a loud voice making sure Eric heard him.

Down to Eric's office he went - those who didn't know Tich were S.....g themselves as to what Eric was going to say (including Champ Watt). "What do you want Eric?" says Tich, "Come in Brian, sit down, how is the wife? How have you been? Could you run down and get me a piece of fish and some chips?" "Make that 2 pieces and double the chips and your on" says Tich.

Half hour later there was Eric and Tich eating fish and chips and having a great time, while down in the officer's quarters, Bill Brady was still trying to pacify Ray Watt and convince him not to lay charges and saying "I'll talk to Tich". Bill had a smirk on his face as he knew the relationship between Eric and Tich. Actually, Eric Wilson thought Tich was was one of the greatest firemen in the job, "A bit rough around the edges though".

Another time, Champ called me into his office about 12 o'clock and said, "Chicken (for some unknown reason he always called me Chicken - I suppose it was better than being called "Bry") I want you to go down to the Deaf and Dumb Institute in St Kilda Road at 11 o'clock and give them a fire safety lecture". "No worries Boss" - Went down, done the lecture, came back and reported to Champ, "Lecture done boss". "How did it go Chicken?" "Very good" I replied. "When I finished they gave me three cheers", and I walked out. He always looked at me funny after that.

Had a call to the Vic Brewery in Victoria Parade one night - false alarm. On the way out of the brewery I

picked up a flat stubbie carton, pushed it into shape, put it on my shoulder and pretending it was full, hopped back into the carriage with it sitting on my knees.

Back at the station, I put it down and took off my uniform. Picking up the carton again I was half way up the iron stairs before Champ found the words he wanted to say. "Hey you there, that fireman with the carton of beer on his shoulder, where are you taking it? You can't take that up there"!!!

I stopped, turned around and said, "OK boss, you can have it" and dropped it. I should never have done that, for the poor bugger didn't know whether to catch it or let it fall. Knowing the noise would attract everyone, all I can remember him saying was "Jeez Christ" and he caught it. When he realised it was empty he didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

No10 Stn's Snorkel had to go to Gov. House on the Monday for Fire Prevention Week, so Champ rang Bing Lyons and told him to get the boys to thoroughly clean it. Half hour later Bing rang Champ to inform him that the station was out of brasso and could he take 80c out of petty cash to buy a tin. "No way" says Champ, "Ill arrange one for you".

Champ calls down thee messenger, "Hop in the car, go to No4 Stn, pick up some brasso and take it to Mr Lyons at No10 Stn". So off went the messenger. Two hours later he returned. "No brasso at No4, went to No13 and got some". We worked it out that to get that tin of brasso to Bing cost about \$50, but no way were they to use petty cash.

A request from Fred Kerr for editions of "News Review" and "Word Back" I ventured down the shed where I had kept many copies going back to 1968. Glancing through them, many names that had served the Brigade over the years came to light. Doc Steele's retirement, Jack Patterson's two retirement nights, Hughie Torney's retirement. Hughie was a great Essendon footballer, runner-up in the 1940 Brownlow Medal. To quote Dick Reynolds, 3 time Brownlow Medallist, "I would not have won them if it had not for Hughie's ruck work".

Tiny Warwick: "A" Platoon No1 and later Eastern District, Photo's of Jack Sheridan's kids probably all married now with kids of their own, Alan Tomlin: Senior Operator "A" No1, Charlie White, Stan Richards, Jack McKimm, Charlie Barton, Norm Parsons, A very young Arthur Kinchela: Swimming Star, Wally Lambert Australian Rower Olympic Games in London. Bill Cook: never forget the day in the city after a call he jumped into the red Arnott's Biscuit van and said "Home driver" - and many, many more.

I hope one day to go to the Museum and read these magazines and reminisce of my days in the job and all of these great characters I worked with.

John Howe

(Continued page 7)

(From page 1)

Where the worst damage occurred, the tenants were for the most part, wool buyers and brokers. On the lower floors, the Brigade fighting in an inferno of steam and smoke, beat back the flames. The damage by water however, was very considerable. When the Brigade saw the flammable contents of Andrew Jack, Dyson & Co (it was a printing house), they realised there was no hope of saving it. Flames were spouting from the windows of every floor and roaring up from the roof. Almost as the Brigade prepared for action, the roof fell in with a crash like a salvo of artillery. Looking up the right of way at the rear of the Aberdeen Buildings, one peered under a roof of greasy black smoke into a furnace glowing, where the windows were in Jack's premises. The Brigade was busy in this lane. The firefighters had penetrated into the Aberdeen Buildings, but were very much hampered by the narrow and winding passage ways. The roar of the flames overhead told them that they would have to fight hard to stop the whole block from going. Across the right of way, the roof of the building occupied by Younghusband Row caught, and the windows cracked under the heat, the frames bursting into flame as the glass crashed to the street.

One firefighter, Edward Britt, fell right through the burning floor of the Aberdeen Buildings, emerging almost unrecognisable from the Collins Street entrance, so seriously scorched and singed that he had to go to the hospital.

The most spectacular deed of all, was that of Victor McDonald, a headquarters firefighter, who was shot up in the air at the top of the 93 ft. Miller ladder, and poured what appeared as a tiny thread of water into the smoke. The flames licked out towards him and the smoke hid him. The nozzle of the hose became almost too hot for him to hold, the stream turning to steam as it struck the red hot masonry. Still McDonald held on. Finally, just as the crowd was getting anxious, the great ladder was swung round on its base pivot, and the little figure at the top returned to earth amidst loud cheers.

With dramatic suddenness a salvo of breaking windows indicated that the top floor of the Aberdeen Buildings was about to break forth in fire. A cry went up that a wall was about to fall and the crowd was pushed back. A line of soldiers did excellent service keeping them off the hoses and out of the way of the firefighters.

Some of the crowd in King Street resented the action of the soldiers in keeping the street clear, and at one point blows were struck. The police however, rode their horses on the toes of the unruly, and further trouble did not develop.

At half past four o'clock the fire was at its full fury. The hoses on the Collins Street side were throwing jets of water at the stone fronts of the

buildings which turned to jests of steam as they struck. The steam blowing back across the street formed a rainbow for awhile, which shone beautifully against a black background of smoke. The droning of the powerful pumps dominated all sounds of the fire.

By half past five the vast volumes of water pumped in were visibly winning. The smoke ceased, the black taking on the white colour of steam, tinged with yellow where some stubborn corner still blazed fiercely. But the fire was well under control and some of the appliances were being ordered home by the Chief Officer.

"When all things are considered, it was a remarkably good stop" said Chief Officer Lee. Continuing he said 'When the Brigade arrived Andrew Jack, Dyson & Co's. building was ablaze from front to back, and from top to bottom, and the place was doomed. The brigade began to work on both sides of the fire, and, in fact, all around it, the object being to prevent the fire spreading. Unfortunately our luck was a little out, and we had to contend with faulty construction, from my point of view.

The construction of the new buildings was such that evidently the question of fire prevention was not considered when the structure was being erected. Consequently grave difficulty was experienced by the firefighters in passing from one portion to another. Anyhow, after the very strongest efforts on the part of my staff, we managed to keep the fire confined to practically the top floor, except at the eastern end, next to Andrew Jack's, where the fire got through to the floor below. The water supply was good, and the soldiers did excellent work keeping the crowd back, and altogether from our point of view, we can regard it as an exceedingly good stop.

Apart from its extent, there was nothing exceptional about the fire. Stock such as that of Andrew Jack's burns very slowly, and it is possible that the paper was burning for many hours, and that an enormous heat was generated before the flames broke out. With a terrific heat, it only requires a window to break and the flames will burst out of the building."

Mr. Lee denied statements made in the street that the Brigade arrived late. "There is always somebody who says we arrived late." said Mr. Lee when his attention was drawn to the comment made. "Calls came in to headquarters first from the telephone exchange and then from street alarms. I do not know at this stage how long it was before we arrived at the fire, but I do know we did everything in record time. When the Deputy Chief, Mr. Wilkins arrived, he called for all available assistance. In all we had 90 firefighters on scene."

Barbara McCumisky

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Two fires within 2 days in March 1971. The first, proved disastrous for a country town, eventually putting 400 locals out of work. The second, an experiment in early profiling nabbed the arsonist.

United bearing Corporation Pty Ltd (UBCO) was formed in 1960 for the manufacture of high grade precision ball bearings. The plant was located at ECHUCA on some twenty seven acres of land and at the time provided the main industry for the area employing over four hundred people.

At approximately 1820 hours on Tuesday 23 March, 1971 a fire occurred in the Drawing and Engineering Office, this caused damage estimated at \$100,000:00 with incalculable losses in the forward planning which placed the Company some two years behind in forward planning and necessitated the obtaining of drawings and documentation from the parent company in SWEDEN to enable limited production to continue.

The ECHUCA POLICE were informed some twenty hours after the occurrence when an Insurance Assessor contacted them with the opinion that there appeared to be suspicious circumstances surrounding the cause of the fire.

Local Police inquiries commenced and the Arson Squad attended. A thorough search of the Drawing and Engineering Office was carried out, all debris was removed and examined and samples taken for forensic examination.

After the completion of the debris removal the floor was washed down and allowed to dry, this revealed significant burn pattern characteristics.

Interviews took place with employees who were last to leave the premises, they were required to give a detailed account of their movements with supporting times and corroboration to verify their movements. It was found that one employee had a discrepancy of three (3) minutes in the account of his movements.

Further inquiries revealed this employee had been dismissed and then reinstated after an internal dispute with management and was a volunteer member of a local Fire Brigade (*he actually responded to the call*)

Following further interviews this employee

* made and signed full written record of interview admitting to lighting the fire

* his reason given was to get back at management,

* made hand written alterations and additions to his Record of Interview.

* read his Record of Interview into a tape recorder in the presence of a Senior Police Officer not involved with the investigation

* produced on his own volition a scaled drawing of the Office giving written details of his movements and actions whilst lighting the fire

* returned to the scene and indicated in photographs how and where he lit the fire



Above: These burn patterns were revealed after the debris was removed and the floor washed. This pointed to an arson attack and the early arrest of the offender. Unfortunately the company never recovered and closed down soon after.

It is understood that prior to his appearance at the Supreme Court at Shepparton the offender received the following Legal Advice :

- To shave off his beard and get a haircut
- Wear a presentable suit in Court complete with tie
- Plead GUILTY

On Wednesday June 1, 1971, the Offender pleaded GUILTY to charges under Section 202 of the Crimes act, He was convicted and placed on PROBATION for a period of three years.

It is understood following the fire the Company gradually wound down and subsequently closed with some four hundred employees being effected!

At approximately 2345 hours on 25th March 1971 a fire completely gutted an ANSETT FOKKER FRIENDSHIP Series F27 Aircraft.

At the time of the fire the aircraft was in No.4 Hangar at Essendon Airport for routine service, the aircraft was unattended by authorised personnel at the time.

Over a period of four days the aircraft was

photographed and all the debris was removed and placed on a grid marked on the floor of the hangar beside the aircraft, in this manner the interior of the aircraft was reconstructed in separate sections on the hangar floor.

Following the examination of the debris it was possible to establish the aircraft was deliberately set on fire, the accelerant used, was petropine (*a turpentine based cleaning solvent used on the exterior of the fuselage to lower wind resistance when in flight, this was available in the hangars*).

A hypothetical reconstruction of event, with probable physical characteristics of the potential offender was developed. (*today now known as profiling*)

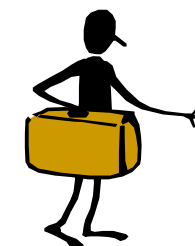
Using this information a female Detective member of the Arson Squad developed a card index system using the profile developed. Remember this was long before computers, thus by physically sorting the profile index cards and incorporating all known and recorded sex offenders within a defined radius of Essendon Airport, into the sorting, a name continued to become apparent.

The potential offender was interviewed and made full admissions that were almost identical with the hypothetical reconstruction of events.

Peter Lang



Above: The burnt-out shell of the aircraft sits in the hangar. A great piece of detective work using early profiling techniques led to the arrest of the arsonist.



TRAVELLING WITH SILVER

As we prepare for another trip it brings to mind the need to utilise your time to the utmost.

We have friends who have just returned from Europe (they have rooms of money, just like Frank The Churchill) and because he and his wife were having a blue (like Frank again) they sat in the lounge at Heathrow from 10am to 10pm on their last day.

I said, "Why didn't you do a city tour"? He said, "We already had done one". I said, "Well, do another, there must be six city tours in London". He said, "She didn't want to". I said, "She ought to be knocked up or knocked out or something". What a waste of a day.

This brings me to the "City of Tours", New York, The Big Apple or anything else you may like to call it. I personally love the place, just use common sense and like any big city you shouldn't have any trouble.

New York was the first capital of the U.S.A. There are tours to the Harlem home of one Marris Jumel, a wine importer where George Washington planned the War of Independence.

Go to the Waldorf Astoria Hotel where the kitchen is one block long and produces up to 5000 meals a day.

Zabel's Bagel Factory stocks 700 varieties of cheese. Visitors to New York can learn these and other facts on KITT GARRETT'S Discover New York tours for individuals or small groups.

There are tours for culinary, art, theatre, history and architecture buffs.

The 3 hour Waldorf Astoria tour includes great stories about famous guests and how the hotel came into being. Nostalgia is brought about by the sight of the two storey ballroom where Count Basie and Glen Miller's Bands played in the Starlight Roof Bar.

If you are into flora and fauna, Central Park and believe it or not - the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens have horticultural tours. Art lovers can visit artist's studios and there are any number of art galleries or the auction houses - Southerby's or Christie's.

Behind the scene trips to Broadway and Off Broadway backstage theatres and Carnegie Hall. There are Hell's Kitchen, China Town and Little Italy eats tours. The Hell's Kitchen visitors see houses of underworld figures, (the Mafia bosses live in Long Island mansions).

Tours range from \$130 to \$260 per head, depending on the size of the tour group. As for me, I get the inside tours with tour guide Robert E. Hesse, Battalion Chief N.Y.F.D. for nothing - which is even better.

Incidentally, Eddie McMullen, have you still got that lady friend living in Harlem? I think you said she was your Aunty.... ohh well!!!

Happy travelling
Silver